

"LOUD THEY MOCKED AT THE CLUMSV CHURL."

# THE CHRISTMAS SONG OF CAEDMON.

BY BERTHA E. BUSH.

THEY gathered round the tables,  
In the rough, glad days of yore,  
And their boisterous shouts made the  
arches ring  
At the sight of the smoking boar.

They passed the harp around the board,  
And every one must sing  
For the honor of his lady-love,  
Or the glory of his king.

The page he lilted a tender lay  
As he lightly touched the string;  
The yeoman shouted a jocund catch  
As he thumped the sounding thing.

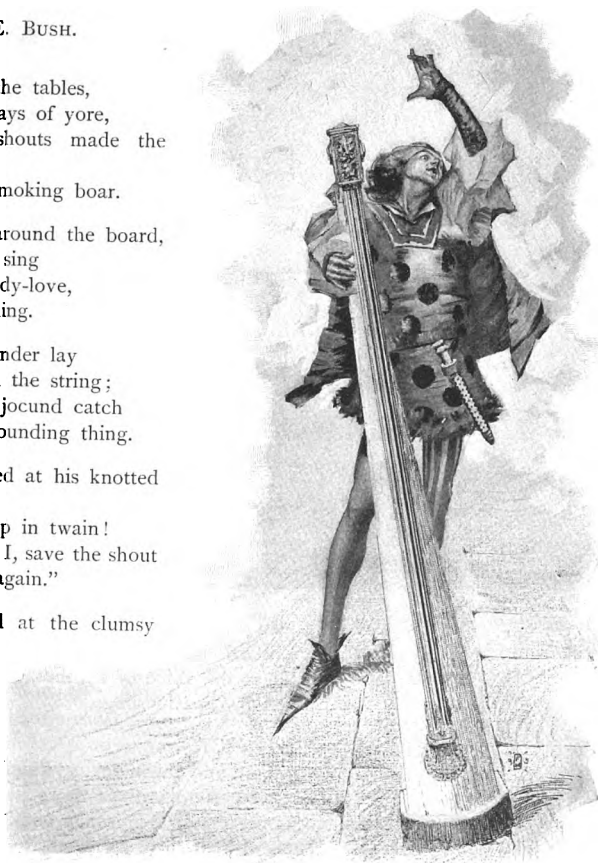
But the herdsman looked at his knotted  
hands:

"I should rend the harp in twain!  
And never a song know I, save the shout  
That calls the cattle again."

Then loud they mocked at the clumsy  
churl,

Till he rose with  
a w k w a r d  
stride

And made his  
way to the  
cattle-sheds,  
His shame and  
grief to hide.



## THE CHRISTMAS SONG OF CÆDMON.

But lo! as he slept on the straw, he caught  
 The glint of an angel's wing:  
 God's angel placed in his hand a harp,  
 And bade the herdsman sing.

"I cannot, Lord, for my clumsy hands,  
 And my voice so harsh and loud,  
 And I have no words."  
 "I will give thee words."  
 And Cædmon obedient bowed.



The herdsman stood in his laborer's smock,  
 Nor questioned, but ere long  
 Like a child at the voice of his mother,  
 He opened his lips in song.

The lilting page and the mocking knight  
 And the yeoman went their way;  
 Their deeds are done, their songs forgot,  
 But the herdsman sings for aye.